

ψ ψ The Big Brum Reindeer RESCUE!

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Cleo was a little girl who loved Christmas. Even when the sun was shining, she preferred to stay inside, colouring in pictures of elves, reindeer and snowmen. For her 5th birthday, she decorated her bedroom with paper snowflakes, and she wrote her Christmas list for Santa in the summer holidays!

Christmas made Cleo incredibly happy, but it seemed to make her dad grumpy. He didn't want to celebrate it – not in the summer holidays and not at all. He didn't even want to buy a Christmas tree for their house this year. "It'll just make a mess", he told Cleo.

But because Cleo's dad loved her a lot, he did make one promise: "I'll take you Christmas shopping in Birmingham, when it's December".

Cleo had been waiting and waiting for December to arrive, crossing the days off on her calendar. Finally, it was here. "Dad, it's December!", she yelled up the stairs as she pulled on her warm boots and red coat, ready to go and buy presents for her friends!

Her dad sighed a long, grown-up sigh but nodded, as he stood on the landing in his dressing gown. He hadn't slept as there'd been a big, blustery storm in the night. It had shaken all the windows! But he had to keep his promise. "I can survive one Christmassy day – what's the worst that can happen?", he asked himself.

On the train into Birmingham, Cleo couldn't sit still because she was so excited. The journey seemed to take forever and when they arrived, she skipped through New Street Station, while holding her dad's hand. She even gave a little wave to Ozzy the Bull, who towered above her with his two giant metal horns which had been decorated in tinsel.

Her dad looked up at the bull: "I bet Ozzy doesn't like Christmas", he thought. At that very moment, the bull seemed to turn and wink at him with one large purple eye! Cleo's dad couldn't believe it – surely he had imagined that!

But it was the first of many strange things that would happen that day...

Birmingham was busy with shoppers and families, who walked underneath shining Christmas lights. New Street was filled with wooden market stalls, and the air smelt like hot chocolate. Everyone seemed excited, except Cleo's dad.



“Do you think there’s more? Because how many reindeer does Santa need to pull his sleigh?”

“9!” shouted Cleo. “Let’s find them all and help Santa..”

With one hand she grabbed the mince pie-munching reindeer by its reins; with the other, she held her dad’s hand tightly and started running after the lost reindeer in Birmingham.

They found one taking a bath in the Victoria Square fountains, splashing the Floozie in the Ja-cuzzi! Cleo tempted it away by offering it a candy cane, which it seemed to like!

At the Christmas market, one reindeer was enjoying some chocolate waffles and nearby, they discovered a reindeer dancing down Corporation Street, almost causing the tram to crash!

It was getting dark by the time they had found 8 reindeer, including one which was trying on woolly, long scarves and looking at its reflection in a shop mirror!

“We need to find one more reindeer”, said Cleo. “And Santa”, said her dad, “because I don’t want to take these reindeer home with us!”

As Cleo started to worry that they’d never find Santa, a red flashing light appeared in front of her eyes. Her dad jumped at the sight. But Cleo laughed, “Look, it’s Rudolph with his big, sparkly red nose! And I think he wants us to follow him”.

Cleo and her dad leapt to their feet, and followed the shiny, red-nosed reindeer through town, pulling the other 8 behind them. He led them past the busy shops, bars and restaurants, where people stopped to stare open-mouthed, before guiding them towards the canals.

Although it was dark, Cleo could see something in the water. Someone was wearing a big red coat and he had a big white beard and he was sat in a sleigh, which was stuck in the middle of the canal...

“Look, look, it’s Santa!”, she yelled.

The reindeer began to neigh with excitement.

“Santa must have crashed into the water!”, Cleo’s dad said.

Santa waved at Cleo, beckoning her closer onto the path next to the water. “Can you help me? I’m stuck in the Birmingham canal!”

“How did that happen?”, Cleo asked.

“Well, I’d just flown to Birmingham to collect some toys but on my way back to the North Pole there was an awful storm which spun the sleigh round and round, and landed us here. The reindeer managed to scramble out of the water, but I’m stuck in the sleigh. And there’s so many toys in the back that the water is starting to flood it. My socks are all soggy and my feet are wet! Please help me!”.

Cleo nodded, because she’d had an idea. “The reindeer can pull you out! Me and my dad will throw their reins over to you if you can catch them and hold on”.

Cleo and her dad threw the reins across the water to Santa, who caught and clung onto them, tightly.



“Now PULL!”, yelled Cleo at the reindeer.

The reindeer pulled and pulled, trying to move the sleigh. But it was stuck in the water, tilting to one side now as water flooded it. “I’m afraid the reindeer aren’t strong enough”, said Santa shaking his head.

Cleo felt sad. If Santa was stuck in Birmingham, there would be no Christmas this year. “Dad, what are we going to do now?” she asked. But he’d disappeared.

“Where’s my dad gone?” she shouted across to Santa.

He was saying something back but she couldn’t hear his reply because at that very moment, the water started rippling and then splashing and splashing, from side to side. Boom, boom, boom, clankety, clank, clank. What was that enormous noise?

As Cleo turned round to see where the noise was coming from, she saw Ozzy the Bull charging towards the canal, with her dad riding on top of him! “We needed another animal with more strength”, he called to Cleo. “We can use his tail as an anchor to pull the sleigh out!”



Her dad jumped down from the big bull and threw Ozzy’s strong metal tail towards the sleigh, where it rocked the boat. Santa looked a little scared, but then happy, as he hooked it onto the edge of the sleigh, securing it.

“Now, PULL, Ozzy, pull!”, yelled Cleo, her dad and Santa all together.

The reindeer also helped Ozzy, lining up on each side to pull the sleigh, as Santa clung onto their reins. As they pulled and pulled, the sleigh began to move forward through the water, bumping out of the canal and onto the path.

“We did it!”, shouted Cleo.

Thank you so much for saving me!”, said Santa, smiling and patting his reindeer. He even gave a pat on the bottom to Ozzy the bull, who bellowed loudly!

Then, Santa beckoned for Cleo to come closer and passed her a small gift from the bottom of his wet sleigh. “This is for you to remember the day you saved my reindeer and Christmas and me”.

She tore off the green and gold striped wrapping to reveal a glittering gold reindeer decoration. It had a shiny red nose which flashed on and off.

“It’s for your Christmas tree”, said Santa.

Cleo looked sad and said, “But my dad doesn’t want a –“

Her dad interrupted, grinning, “A Christmas tree. That is exactly what we need to buy!”

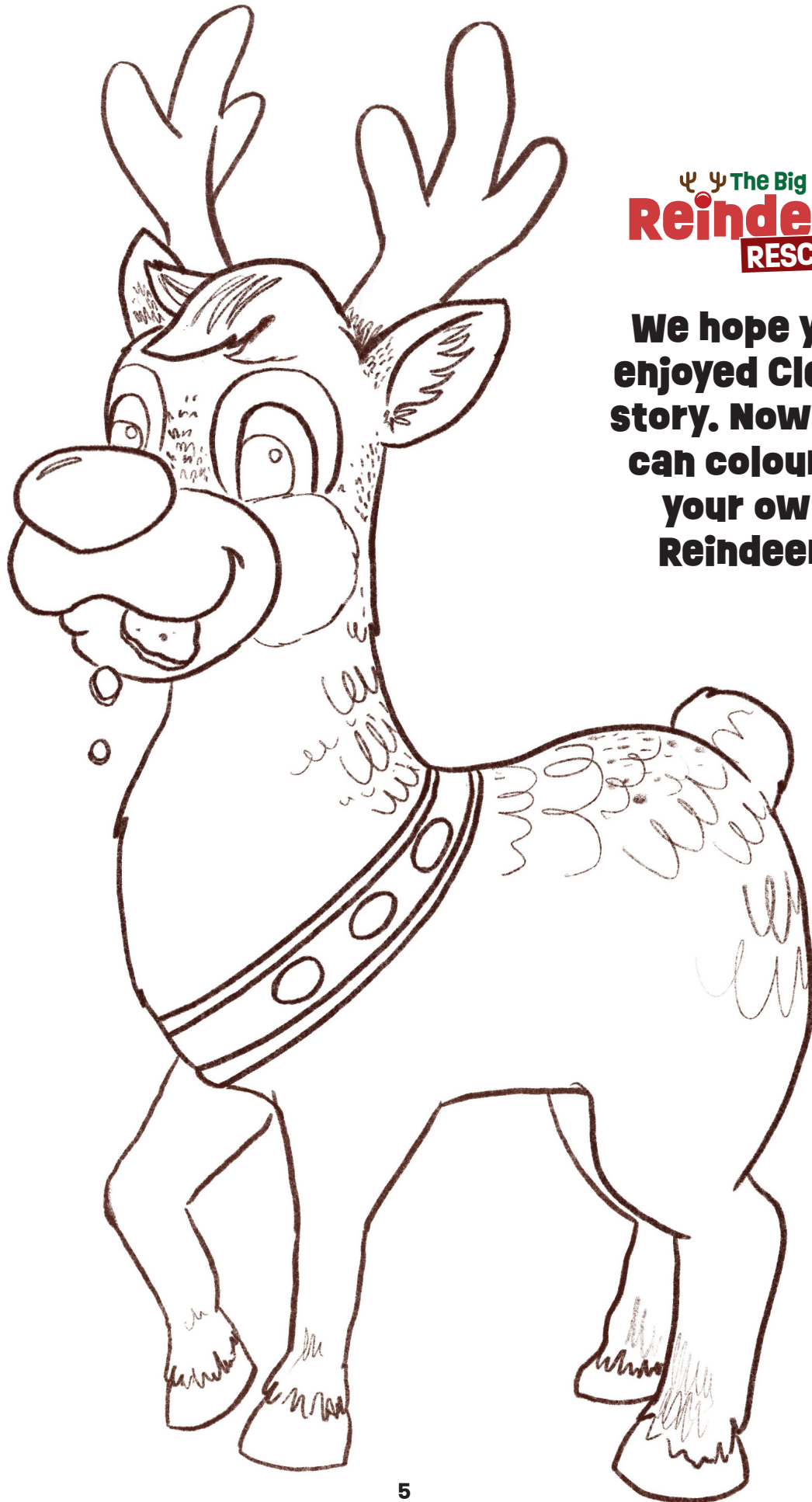
Cleo hugged her dad, and the reindeer started to neigh, then click their hooves.

“It’s time to fly!”, said Santa. “We’ve got to get back to the North Pole with all this chocolate – we’ve got work to do before Christmas Eve!”.

As the reindeer galloped along the canal, gaining speed, and lifting into the air, leaving Birmingham below, Cleo’s dad turned to her.

“We’ve got some decorating to do!”.

And from then on, every December Cleo and her dad covered their house in Christmas decorations, including a little gold reindeer which they put on the very top of their tree.



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**We hope you
enjoyed Cleo's
story. Now you
can colour in
your own
Reindeer!**